

The Pedigree, Education, and Marriage of Robin Hood, with Clorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast.

Supposed to be related by the FIDLER, who play'd at their WEDDING.

Note, As the Use of these Old Songs is very great, in respect that many Children never would have learn'd to Read, had they not took a Delight in poring over Fair Rosamond, Jane Shore, &c. which has insensibly stole into them a Curiosity and Desire of Reading other the like Stories, till they have improv'd, themselves more in a short time than perhaps they would have done in some Years at School: In order still to make them more useful, I premise to affix an Introduction, in which I shall point out what is Fact and what is Fiction in each Song; which will (as may readily be suppos'd) give not only Children, but Persons of more ripe Years, an Insight into the Reality, Intent and Design, as well as many times the Author and Time when such Song was made, which has not hitherto been explain'd.

There is scarce any Story so little known, for one so very popular, as that of Robin Hood and Little John. Numbers there are, who look upon all that is said of 'em as fabulous, and believe 'em (like the Heroes and Gods of Homer and Ovid) to have exist'd nowhere but in the fertile Brain of an inventing Poet. Nor is this the Opinion only of a few unthinking People. I have often heard it asserted by Men of good Sense; but that they are grossly mistaken, is very certain. For King Richard the First, transported with Zeal, blindly sacrific'd every Thing to it, and ruin'd himself, and almost the whole Nation, to carry on a War against the Infidels in the Holy Land, where he went in Person. caball'd to dethrone him, and to take Possession of his Kingdom. This was an Opportunity, which the Out-laws and Banditti would by no means neglect; and England was every where infested with Thieves and Robbers. But amongst these, none made so considerable a Figure as Robin Hood; who, as our Historians assure us, chiefly resided in Yorkshire; but who, if we may give any Credit to most of our old Songs, was very conversant in the County of Nottingham. Besides Little John, he had a Hundred Bowmen in his Retinue. But none but the Rich stood in Awe of him: So far from spoiling the Poor, that he did them all the Good that lay in his Power. Of the Rich, he seldom abus'd those he robb'd; and never offer'd to stop, or rise any Woman. It is not very positively known who he was; but the general Opinion of the Historians is, that he was a Noblemans; by Birth noble, and created an Earl that Way of Living; rather chusing to venture his Life for every Thing he got, than to live in a dependent State, and be beholden to any Body for his Bread. Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, and very considerable Price upon the Head of Robin Hood; and several Stratagems were made use of to apprehend him: But all their Attempts prov'd fruitless. Force he repell'd by Force, and Art by Cunning: Till at length falling sick, he went (in Order to be the better taken care of) to Birkleys, a Nunnery in Yorkshire; where he desir'd to be let blood: But the Reward set upon his Head being very considerable, it prov'd a great Temptation to some who knew him, by whom he was betray'd; and instead of bleeding as he desir'd, he was blooded to Death, about the latter End of the Year 1195, or the Beginning of the following Year. As to the Song it self, I think I need not say any Thing in Commendation of it; being the most beautiful, and one of the oldest extant, written on that Subject. One Thing we must observe in reading it, and that is, between some of the Stanza's we must suppose a considerable Time to pass. Clorinda might be thought a very forward Girl, if, between Robin Hood's Question and her Answer, we did not suppose Two or Three Hours to have been spent in Courtship: And between Robin Hood's being entertain'd at Gamwel-Hall, and his having Ninety-three Bowmen in Sherwood, we must allow some Years. I know not how our Critics will relish this; but I would have 'em remember, that our Poets of old scorn'd to curb this Poetical Fire, to give Way to dull Rules. They had no tedious Comments upon Aristotle to consult; no Bossu's nor D-n-n-s to guide them, or, at least, they had too much Sense to be guided by them. Their Works were the first Flight of a lively Imagination; and Poets were look'd upon like our Englishmen, born to live and write with Freedom.



KIND Gentlemen, will you be patient a while? Ay, and then you shall hear anon
A very good Ballad of bold Robin Hood,
And of his Man, brave Little John.
In Locksy Town, in merry Nottinghamshire,
In merry sweet Locksy Town;
There bold Robin Hood he was born and was bred,
Bold Robin of famous Renown.
The Father of Robin a Forester was,
And he shot in a lusty long Bow,
Two North Country Miles and an Inch at a Shot,
As the Pindar of Wakefeld does know.
For he brought Adam Bell, and Clum of the Clugh,
And William a Clowdell too,
To shoot with our Forester for Forty Marks,
And the Forester beat them all Three.
His Mother was Niece to the Coventry Knight,
Which Warwickshire Men call Sir Guy;
For he slew the blue Boar that hangs up at the Gate,
Or mine Host of the Bull tell you.
Her Brother was Gamwel, of Great Gamwel-Hill,
and a noble House-keeper was he,

Ay, as ever broke Bread in sweet Nottinghamshire,
And a 'Squire of famous Degree.
The Mother of Robin said to her Husband,
My Honey, my Love, and my Dear,
Let Robin and I ride this Morning to Gamwel,
To taste of my Brother's good Cheer.
And he said, I grant thee thy Boon, gentle Joan,
Take one of my Horses, I pray:
The Sun is arising, and therefore make haste,
For To-morrow is Christmas Day.
Then Robin Hood's Father's grey Gelding was brought,
And saddl'd and bridl'd was he;
God wot, a blue Bonnet, his new Sure of Cloaths,
And a Cloak that did reach to his Knee.
She got on her Holyday Kirtle and Gown,
They were call of a light Lincoln Green;
The Cloth was home spun, but for Colour and Make,
It might have befecmed our Queen.
And then Robin got on his Basket-hilt Sword,
And a Dagger on his t'other Side;
And said, my dear Mother let's haste to be gone,
We have forty long Miles to ride.

When Robin he mounted his Gelding so grey,
His Father without any Trouble,
Set her up behind him, and bade her not fear,
For his Gelding had oft carry'd double.
When she was settl'd, they rode to their Neighbours,
And drank and shook Hands with them all:
And then Robin gallop'd, and never gave o'er
Till they lighted at Gamwel-Hall.
And now you may think the right worshipful 'Squire,
Was joyful his Sister to see;
For he kiss'd her, and kiss'd her, and swore a great
Thou art welcome, kind Sister to me.
The Morrow when Maf had been said in the Chapel,
Six Tables were cover'd in the Hall;
And in comes the 'Squire, and makes a short Speech,
It was, Neighbours, you're welcome all.
But not a Man here, shall taste my March Beer,
Till a Christmas Carol he doth sing:
Then all clapt their Hands, and they shouted and sung
Till the Hall and the Parlour all ring.
Now Mustard and Brawn, Roast Beef and Plumb-Pies,
Were set upon every Table:

And Noble George Gamwel said, eat and be merry,
And drink too as long as you're able.
When Dinner was ended, his Chaplain said Grace,
And be merry, my Friends, said the 'Squire;
It Rains and it Blows, but call for more Ale,
And lay some more Wood on the Fire.
And now call ye Little John hither to me,
For Little John is a fine Lad
At Gambols, and Juggling, and twenty such Tricks,
As shall make you both merry and glad.
When Little John came, to Gambols they went,
Both Gentlemen, Yeomen, and Clown;
And what do you think? Why as true as I live,
Bold Robin Hood put them all down.
And now you may think the right worshipful 'Squire,
Was joyful this Sight for to see;
For he said Cousin Robin, thou'lt go no more Home,
But tarry, and dwell here with me.
Thou shalt be the Staff of my Age,
Then grant me my Boon, dear Uncle, said Robin,
That Little John may be my Page.
And he said, kind Cousin, I grant thee thy Boon,
With all my Heart, so let it be:
Then come hither, Little John, said Robin Hood,
Come hither, my Page, unto me.
Go fetch me my Bow, my longest long Bow,
And broad Arrows one, two, or three;
For when 'tis fair Weather, we'll into Sherwood,
Some merry Pastime to see.
When Robin Hood came into merry Sherwood,
He winded his Bugle so clear;
And twice five and twenty good Yeomen and bold,
Before Robin Hood did appear.
Where are your Companions all, said Robin Hood,
For still I want forty and three:
Then said a bold Yeoman, Lo, yonder they stand,
All under a green Wood Tree.
As that Word was spoke, Clorinda came by,
The Queen of the Shepherds was she;
And her Gown was of Velvet as green as the Grass,
And her Buskin did reach to her Knee.
Her Gait it was graceful, her Body was strait,
And her Countenance free from Pride;
A Bow in her Hand, a Quiver and Arrows
Hung dangling by her sweet Side.
Her Eye-brows were black, ay, and so was her Hair,
And her Skin was as smooth as a Glass,
Her Visage spoke Wisdom and Modesty too;
Sets with Robin Hood such a Last?
Said Robin Hood, Lady fair, whither away;
Oh whither, fair Lady, away?
And she made him Answer to kill a fat Buck,
For To-morrow is Titbury Day.
Said Robin Hood, Lady fair, wander with me,
A little to yonder green Bower;
There sit down to rest yon, and you shall be sure
Of a Brace, or a Lease in an Hour.
And as we were going towards the green Bow'r,
Two hundred good Bucks we espy'd;
She chose out the fattest that was in the Herd,
And she shot him thro' side and side.
By the Faith of my Body, said bold Robin Hood,
I never saw Woman like thee;
And com'lt thou from East, ay, or com'lt thou from
Thou need'lt not beg Venison of me.
However, along to my Bower you shall go,
And taste of a Forester's Meat:
And when we came thither we found as good Cheer,
As any Man needs for to eat.
For there was hot Venison, and Warden Pies cold,
Cream clouted, and Honey-combs plenty;
And the Servitors they were, beside Little John,
Good Yeomen at least four and twenty.
Clorinda said, tell me your Name, gentle Sir?
And he said, 'tis bold Robin Hood,
'Squire Gamwel's mine Uncle, but all my Delight
Is to dwell in the merry Sherwood.
For 'tis a fine Life, and 'tis void of all Strife:
So 'tis, Sir, Clorinda reply'd,

But oh, said bold Robin, how sweet would it be,
If Clorinda would be my Bride.
She blush'd at the Motion; yet, after a Pause,
Said, yes, Sir, and with all my Heart.
Then let us fend for a Priest, said Robin Hood,
And be marry'd before we do part.
But she said, it may not be so, gentle Sir,
For I must be at Titbury Feast:
And if Robin Hood will go thither with me,
I'll make him the most welcome Guest.
Said Robin Hood, reach me that Buck, Little John,
For I'll go along with my Dear;
And bid my Yeomen kill six Brace of Bucks,
And meet me To-morrow just here.
Before he had ridden five Staffordshire Miles,
Bid Robin Hood stand, and deliver his Buck,
A truer Tale never was told.
I will not, faith, said bold Robin: Come, John,
Stand to me, and we'll beat 'em all:
Then both drew their Swords, and cut 'em and slash'd
That Five of the Eight did fall.
The Three that remain'd, call'd to Robin for Quarter,
And pitiful John begg'd their Lives:
When John's Boon was granted, he gave them good
And so sent them home to their Wives. (Counsel
This Battle was fought near to Titbury Town,
When the Bag-pipes baited the Bull;
I am the King of the Fiddlers, and swear 'tis a Truth,
And I call him that doubts it, a Gull.
For I saw them fighting, and fiddled the while,
And Clorinda sung, Hey derry down,
The Bumkins are beaten; put up thy Sword Bob,
And now let's dance into the Town.
Before we came to it, we heard a strange Shouting,
And all that were in it look'd madly,
For some were a Bull back, some dancing a Morris,
And some singing Arthur a Bradley.
And there we saw Thomas our Justice's Clerk,
And Mary to whom he was kind:
For Tom rode before her, and call'd Mary Madam,
And kiss'd her full sweetly behind.
And so may your Worships. But we went to Dinner,
With Thomas, and Mary, and Nan:
They all drank a Health to Clorinda, and told her,
Bold Robin Hood was a fine Man.
When Dinner was ended, Sir Roger the Parson,
Of Dubbridge was sent for in Haste:
He brought his Mass-Book, and bade them take Hands,
And he join'd them in Marriage full fast.
And then as bold Robin Hood and his sweet Bride,
Went Hand in Hand to the green Bow'r;
The Birds sung with Pleasure in merry Sherwood,
And 'twas a most joyful Hour.
And when Robin came in the Sight of the Bow'r;
Where are my Yeomen, said he?
And Little John answer'd, Lo yonder they stand,
All under the green Wood Tree.
Then a Garland they brought her, by two and by two;
And plac'd them at the Bride's Head:
The Musick struck up, and we all fell to dance,
Till the Bride and the Groom were in Bed.
And what they did there, must be Counsel to me,
Because they lay long the next Day:
And I made haste home: But I got a good Piece,
Of the Bride-Cake, and so came away.
Now out, alas, I had forgotten to tell ye,
That marry'd they were with a Ring;
And so will Nan Knight, or be bury'd a Maiden,
And now let us pray for our King;
That he may get Children, and they may get more,
To govern, and do us some good:
And then I'll make Ballads in Robin Hood's Bower,
And sing 'em in merry Sherwood.

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